

This year, beginning at their neighborhood pools, residents will pick up thousands of pounds of litter near sidewalks, greenbelt trails and curbs.

These volunteer efforts are commendable and an inspiration for others to show pride in their communities.

I am proud to have Kingwood, Texas, in my district.

That's just the way it is.

# THE COLLEGE STUDENT RELIEF ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

**HON. PETER HOEKSTRA**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 17, 2007*

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in opposition of H.R. 5.

Today we are considering the College Student Relief Act of 2007. Democrats have claimed that this legislation will provide relief to students going to college. However, what they have done is propose a classic bait and switch.

This bill will not improve access to higher education for low- and middle-income Americans nor will it provide relief for students in college today. This relief, when fully phased in, will benefit college graduates for only 6 months.

H.R. 5 reduces interest rates for only undergraduate subsidized loans over 5 years from 6.8 percent to 3.4 percent.

By the time the interest rate is cut in half, the 3.4 percent interest rate is only in effect for half a year. The student loan interest rate goes back to 6.8 percent permanently starting January 1, 2012. In other words, it snaps back just 6 months after it is fully phased in at a cost of \$7 billion.

The reality of the situation is that the Democrats could not follow through on their campaign promise to cut interest rates in half because they couldn't pay for it.

So first they narrowed the field down to one subset of student loans. Then, they phased the rate cut in. Then, they ended it after 5 years. What is left is this "bait and switch" benefit that will expire in a mere 6 months after it is fully phased in.

Democrats have talked about improving access to higher education for lower- and middle-income Americans. H.R. 5 does not provide relief to college students seeking to pay their tuition. It does not do anything to get more students into college.

This bill provides a back-end benefit to college graduates instead of a front-end benefit for those trying to get in the door of a university.

The bill will not help a single graduate student saddled with a heavy financial burden.

H.R. 5 is a boon to the Direct Loan Program. The Direct Loan Program's market share has fallen to 22 percent because schools have chosen FFEL. Cutting FFEL lenders is the only way to increase the competitive position of direct lending, a program that is withering on the vine through the voluntary attrition of colleges.

CBO estimates that cutting interest rates will cost taxpayers more than \$7 billion. In order to off-set the cost, the proposal before us will cut

government payments to loan providers. While reducing lender payments, I'm concerned that rate reductions, fee waivers, loan forgiveness and other benefits will be taken away from students seeking higher education loans.

Lowering interest rates for borrowers could result in schools increasing tuition. If that is the result, borrowers won't get any relief at all. The real issue is college cost, not student loan interest rates!

During the 109th Congress, we enacted policies that reduced student loan fees by allowing students to consolidate with lenders that best met their needs. Origination fees were reduced and loan limits were also increased, allowing more students to gain access to much-needed financial aid.

Supporting H.R. 5 will not help students achieve higher education affordability.

# RECOGNIZING MS. SANDRA J. ELLIS FOR HER SERVICE AND DEDICATION ON THE OCCASION OF HER RETIREMENT

**HON. J. RANDY FORBES**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 24, 2007*

Mr. FORBES. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Ms. Sandra J. Ellis for her loyal service to the United States of America.

Sandy's commitment to the armed services of our country and the Fort Lee community is to be highly commended.

Sandra J. Ellis was born in Petersburg, Virginia on June 16, 1948, which is Flag Day. The daughter of an Air Force officer, Sandy grew up in a military family that lived in Illinois, South Dakota, and years later returned to Virginia.

While Sandy's first roles at Fort Lee were as a stage performer with Special Services and as an entertainer at the hospital ward there, it was after high school that Sandy entered Petersburg General Hospital School of Nursing/Richard Bland College. In 1967 she decided to take a semester off and took a part-time position at Fort Lee. In a short while, she was offered a permanent position which she accepted. At a time when many young men and women were joining the Army during the build-up in Vietnam, Sandy chose to serve her country at Fort Lee; and so she did for 40 years.

Sandy began her dedicated service to the Army as a Military Personnel Clerk. During her career, she consistently earned more responsibility and took on positions as a Port Call Clerk, Secretary, Congressional Inquiry Specialist, Administrative Specialist, and Protocol Officer. Most recently, she has served as the Public Affairs Officer, where she has been the officer responsible for media and community relations at Fort Lee, an Army community of more than 12,000 and home of the Quartermaster Center and School. As the chief liaison to the surrounding community, Sandy played a central role in steering the installation and the community through the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process.

Sandy Ellis has shown a demonstrated commitment to the Army, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the nation that is rarely equaled. She has served during eight different Presidential administrations, and her loyalty to

the servicemen and women at Fort Lee deserves particular attention and admiration. Today, we salute her for her unwavering dedication to her profession and the American people. Furthermore, we salute her husband John Ellis, and her son, Jay, without whom Sandy's work would not have been possible nor as meaningful as it has been.

Madam Speaker, please join me in honoring Sandy Ellis on her retirement from Federal service in the United States Army.

# A PROCLAMATION HONORING HELEN BASS SMITH ON HER 90TH BIRTHDAY

**HON. ZACHARY T. SPACE**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 24, 2007*

Mr. SPACE. Madam Speaker, Whereas, Mrs. Smith has shown an extraordinary commitment to her community by volunteering at the Salvation Army in Cadiz, Ohio, and at the Harrison Community Hospital, where she has been president of the Hospital Auxiliary for 4 years; and

Whereas, Mrs. Smith has demonstrated values of hard work and service throughout her life, always maintaining a positive outlook; and

Whereas, Mrs. Smith has worked for the United States Department of Agriculture, the Scio Pottery Company, Lib Gray's Dressmaker Shop, and as a farmer for many years and still continues her active lifestyle by walking 2 miles every day; and

Whereas, Mrs. Smith's character has been praised by her hospital volunteer coordinator, who describes her as "nothing short of magnificent" and that her spirit is "not a day over 14;" Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, that along with her friends, family, and the residents of the 18th Congressional District, I wish Helen Bass-Smith a happy and healthy 90th birthday. We recognize the tremendous impact she has had in her community and in the lives of all those people she has touched.

# NEW DIRECTION FOR IRAQ ACT OF 2007

**HON. EARL BLUMENAUER**

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, January 24, 2007*

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing, along with Congresswoman TAMMY BALDWIN and Congressman SAM FARR, the New Direction for Iraq Act, the first legislation introduced in Congress to deal comprehensively with the military, diplomatic, political, economic and humanitarian strategies needed to move forward in Iraq.

On November 7th, the American people sent a strong and clear message that it's time to change the course in Iraq. Unfortunately, President Bush is proposing more of the same. Instead of listening to the majority of Americans, Iraqis, and military experts, the President's stubborn adherence to a clearly failed strategy is undermining our security and putting more of our troops and Iraqis at risk. Our troops have performed valiantly, but